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AMENDMENT

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## IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 9 and 13, amend claims 8 and 12, and add new claim 17, as shown below in the detailed listing of all claims which are, or were, in the application:

Claims 1-7 (Canceled)

8. (Currently amended) A composition for controlled release of a biologically active agent from a carrier, said composition consisting essentially of a biologically active agent which is heparin or a related biologically active acidic polysaccharide, and a carrier which is a sol-gel derived silica xerogel, wherein the xerogel is derived from a tetraalkoxysilane tetraethoxysilane and part of the tetraalkoxysilane, up to 25 mol-%; tetraethoxysilane is replaced by an alkylsubstituted alkoxysilane, and wherein said composition is biodegradable.

## 9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 8, wherein said alkylsubstituted alkoxysilane is a member selected from the

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group consisting of methyltriethoxysilane (METES), dimethyldiethoxysilane (DMDES) and ethyltriethoxysilane (ETES).

- 11. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 8, wherein said biologically active agent is heparin and which is present in an amount of 5 to 30 weight percent, calculated on the air dried xerogel.
- 12. (Currently amended) A method for the preparation of a composition for controlled release of a biologically active agent from a carrier, said method consisting essentially of
- a) hydrolysing an alkoxysilane and an alkyl substituted alkoxysilane in the presence of a catalyst,
- b) optionally adjusting the pH to a value suitable for the biologically active agent,
- c) adding the biologically active agent,
- d) allowing the hydroxysilane to polymerize, and optionally
- e) removing water and alcohol formed in the hydrolyzation from the mixture, wherein said composition consists essentially of a biologically active agent which is heparin or a related biologically active acidic polysaccharide, and a carrier which is

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a sol-gel derived silica xerogel, wherein the xerogel is derived from a tetraalkoxysilane tetraethoxysilane and part of the tetraalkoxysilane tetraethoxysilane is replaced by an alkylsubstituted alkoxysilane, and wherein said composition is biodegradable.

- 13. (Canceled)
- 14. (Canceled)
- 15. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12, wherein said alkylsubstituted alkoxysilane is at least one member of the group consisting of methyltriethoxysilane (METES), dimethyldiethoxysilane (DMDES) and ethyltriethoxysilane (ETES).
  - 16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12, wherein nitric acid or acetic acid is used as a catalyst.
  - 17. (New) The composition of claim 8, wherein said alkylsubstituted alkoxysilane is present in said xerogel in an amount effective to increase a release rate of said biologically active agent from said xerogel in comparison to a xerogel prepared from tetraethoxysilane only.